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SUBJECT: AMB. RICE MEETS NORWEGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

Classified By: Amb. Susan Rice, for reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In an April 8 meeting with Ambassador Rice, Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Store discussed U.S. strategy in Afghanistan and his hope to work closely with the U.S. on the Human Rights Council. He also pushed for greater strategic coordination of development assistance and offered to work in the Durban II negotiations to press for changes to the text that would be acceptable to the U.S. End summary.

Durban II / Human Rights Council

¶2. (C) Norwegian FM Store told Amb. Rice on April 8 that he hoped to work closely with the Obama administration to improve already-close relations between the U.S. and Norway. Store said that Norway was particularly appreciative of the administration's constructive approach to multilateral diplomacy. He offered Norway's assistance in engaging with other delegations to the Durban II conference to press for changes to the draft outcome document that would eliminate references objectionable to the U.S. Store welcomed the U.S. decision to run for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council and pledged to work strategically together with the U.S. if, as appeared likely, Norway and Belgium were elected alongside the U.S. to represent the Western European and Others (WEOG) group.

Afghanistan

¶3. (C) Store said that Norway firmly supported President Obama's strategy in Afghanistan, and that one huge challenge would be to define an effective role for the civilian component of the international community's engagement. He said that Norway was attempting to put into practice its support for increased aid coordination by earmarking only 20 percent of its assistance to Afghanistan to the Norwegian PRT's province -- the remaining 80 percent of the funds were to be available for projects throughout the country. He contrasted this with Spain's practice of targeting its aid money to projects such as flying local provincial officials back to Spain for local governance seminars. He complained that such fragmented efforts were unlikely to accomplish much. In response to a question from Amb. Rice about the Afghan national development plan, Store said the plan was sound, but a year old and needed to make full use of development dollars. He also advocated beefing up UNAMA in order to allow it to play a more effective coordinating role. In the security sector, Store said the main problem was the Afghan police. Store believed that the U.S. strategy of using military advisors to train police was not ideal, but that it was justified considering the circumstances.

Health assistance coordination

¶4. (C) The FM made the case for improved coordination of development assistance in the area of health, citing in particular the need to make sure that the efforts of actors such as the Gates Foundation, the Global Fund and the WHO were mutually reinforcing. He said that the current

Norwegian government had achieved a major campaign promise of raising official development assistance to 1 percent of GDP, and that his government sought improved coordination and targeting of aid in order to convince Norwegian voters that their taxes were being well-spent. Amb. Rice responded that improved coordination was important, as was an expanded approach that sought to move beyond disease-specific programming to strengthen the health care infrastructure of host countries.

Rice